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*Sketch of the Life and Character
of Dr. Solomon Williams.*

THE duties of Clergymen are so uniform—and the incidents in the lives of those who faithfully discharge those duties are so similar—that the particular events in the life of such a character are soon forgotten—while the errors of one who has wandered from his duty are long remembered ; as a torrent which has destroyed the labors, and ruined the hopes of the husbandman is remembered, while the mild showers, which fertilized the earth are forgotten. But although all the information relative to the subject of this sketch, has not been obtained, which was wished, perhaps the following account may be gratifying.

The Rev. Solomon Williams, was born on the 16th of January A. D. 1701. His father the Rev. William Williams, originally from Roxbury in the state of Massachusetts, was settled as

a minister in Hatfield—His mother was the daughter of the venerable Solomon Stoddard, of Northampton, whose praise is in all the churches.

Under these parents he had the benefit of pious examples, added to the weight of religious instruction. At Harvard College, he received all the advantages in his education which the first seminary of an infant country could bestow. By indefatigable application to study, he became a distinguished scholar in the liberal arts and sciences : and in 1719, he received the honors of college. Having been early impressed with the truths of religion, and the value of immortal souls, he devoted himself, not from necessity, but from choice, to the study of divinity. Other studies were attended to only as accessaries to this—and as soon as his age made it proper he became a preacher of the gospel. He soon after received a call from the first society in Lebanon in this

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state, and on the 16th day of December 1722, he was ordained. He married Miss Mary Porter of Hadley, by whom he had a numerous offspring, seven of whom survived him. The cares of a family however did not divert his attention from his duty as a minister. His temporal concerns were with him but secondary. He came to do his master's business, and although for many years he was subject to great bodily infirmity, he pursued his studies with unremitting attention, and preached in season and out of season to his flock.

The doctrines upon which he principally insisted were the fallen state of man—the corruption and depravity of our nature, and the impossibility of obtaining salvation upon the terms of the first covenant. The infinite wisdom and grace of God in the constitution of a new covenant, the covenant of grace. The imputation of the righteousness of Christ. The law of faith, through which sinners are justified before God, without works of their own. The necessity of a change of the heart by the Holy Spirit. Repentance towards God. The necessity of new obedience and holiness of heart and life derived from Christ by faith. The supreme love of God, the principle of all true obedience, and that benevolence which is the fulfilling of the law. And after fifty years spent with his people he did not hesitate to say, that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God, so far as God had imparted the same unto him.

But his ministerial labors

were not confined to the pulpit, nor to his parish.

Without assuming any authority, the care of all the neighbouring churches seemed to be upon him. For many years he presided as moderator of the association of Windham county; although during the former part at least of the time it was attended by a number much older than himself. So distinguished was he for his wisdom, that his advice was asked in all important concerns in the vicinity.—Did any dispute exist between minister and people, did any heresy threaten to divide and distract the churches, Mr. Williams was the man to whom they looked for aid. His judgment, his manners, his address, seemed to fit him peculiarly for a mediator between contending parties. The angry passions yielded to the mildness of his manners and the force of his reasoning. And although he was remarkably modest and diffident of his own opinion, he would not deny his time, nor his services to those who asked them.

For twenty years he was a member of the corporation of Yale College; he was a faithful friend of that institution, and he was beloved as well as respected by the students.

About the year 1744 he published seven sermons entitled, "Christ the King and Witness of Truth." Many single sermons of his were also published at the solicitation of individual friends or the Society. He also engaged in a controversy with the Rev. President Edwards respecting the qualifications of those who desired to be admit-

ted to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. In which, however, they differed as to the evidence of qualification, rather than as to the qualification itself.

In 1746 Mr. Williams published, "A Vindication of the Gospel Doctrine of Justifying Faith, being an answer to Mr. Andrew Croswell's argument against a general, and for a particular Faith." In which answer the "sweet dream" that assurance is the essence of Faith, or the Antinomian doctrine is completely refuted. The concluding remarks in the preface will serve to show the temper of the author, and may be useful as an example to future disputants.

"I have not designedly made any injurious personal reflections or misrepresentations of Mr. Croswell nor designedly treated him with indecent warmth or with hard words beyond the merit of the cause; if any thing of this kind has any where dropped from me in this controversy with him, I shall be sorry and readily ask his pardon without pleading his example in excuse. It has been my sincere aim not to expose him, but to vindicate the cause of truth, and the doctrine of the gospel."

In the desk Mr. Williams imperceptibly caught the attention of the hearer, without the attraction of a strong sonorous voice, and without the trappings of a polished style. He seldom spake but from his notes. His sermons were the result of much reading and reflection; they were distinguished by their sound sense, and written in a plain style; free from the arts

of the rhetorician. He studied not to conceal his meaning by his words, but that every word should assist the mind in receiving the idea intended to be communicated. The good of the audience was the object of his preaching, and not their applause. He preached Christ, and not himself. Hence no affected gestures, no theatrical exclamations, no studied tones; yet "there was an air of gravity and pleasantness, of dignity and modesty, of authority and humility," which becomes him who is the ambassador of Christ when he reflects upon his own imperfections. No one could hear him and not believe him sincere. Few could hear him and not be affected. During the time of his ministry there were several revivals of religion in his parish, and one in particular so general that most of the people were under religious concern. Before his settlement, the people were much divided; and during the time of his ministry, many of the neighbouring churches and congregations were rent asunder; but his became more united; and his wisdom and prudence under God prevented in a great measure the diffusion of those errors among his people, which at that time proved so fatal to many others.

In his private ministrations he was singularly useful. His knowledge was not derived from books only, but he had thoroughly studied the human heart; and so far as was consistent with the duties of a Christian, he became all things to all men. With those who came to converse with him vain of their

talents for disputation he would reason. To those who thought an argument dull and reasoning vain, he could display the most keen wit, and the most delicate humour; yet he never offended by personal satire, nor disgusted by the coarseness of his remarks. Always grave, yet always cheerful, he never displeased the young by his moroseness, nor the old by his levity. His passions seemed to have been subdued by grace, and however rudely attacked, he remembered that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." In his deportment he was meek, modest, affable, and condescending, so that any one could approach him; yet he was grave and dignified, so that none could approach him without respect.

All the relative duties he discharged with faithfulness. In his family he was an example of conjugal tenderness and parental affection. He took the most unwearied care in the education of his children, and by his œconomy was enabled to give to four of his sons a liberal education.

Though he sustained the severest trials in the loss of his children, particularly his eldest son who died a few weeks after he had graduated, he was an example of submission and resignation. For more than fifty years he continued in the performance of his ministerial duties and remained able to preach until about six weeks before his death, which happened February 29th 1776. "In his last moments he expressed his perfect satisfaction in the way of redemption by Christ, his firm reliance on the promises and faith-

fulness of God, and his full assurance of his interest in that salvation which the Redeemer has purchased."



Address, Constitution, and Subscription proposal, of the Connecticut Bible Society, presented to the well disposed, of every denomination.

WE invite your serious attention, brethren, to a more *general*, and, as far as possible, to a *universal*, circulation of the holy scriptures. The object, we are convinced, presents an immense field for useful exertion. We are, of course, constrained to view it as important in a high degree; and as having demands upon our solicitude which we cannot neglect and be guiltless.

We view it as matter of devout adoration and praise, that the care of the pious, in various parts of the world, has lately been turned to this interesting subject. By associations for the distribution of bibles among the indigent and careless, multitudes, with whom the sacred writings were not to be found, and who must, in all rational probability, unless assisted by religious charity, have finished their trials for eternity unacquainted with the truths of divine revelation, have been already furnished with these books of life.

We bless God, that, to the societies now existing, for this benevolent purpose in different and far distant districts of the Christian church, he has given success much beyond even the expectations of those by whom

they were instituted. Of these, however, the limits of our address permit us to give no more than a very concise account.

In Great Britain, 1780, a Naval and Military Bible Society was formed. Its only object was the distribution of the holy scriptures among the seamen of the navy, and the soldiers of the army. "By the aid of annual subscriptions, benefactions, and collections at various churches, the society has been enabled to distribute nearly forty thousand bibles, and a great number of testaments." Witnesses of high rank and consideration have borne their repeated and very cordial testimony to the happy effects, that have been experienced.

A little more than five years since, a British and Foreign Bible Society was also established in that island. Its object was the publication of the bible, not only in the English, but in various *other* languages; and the circulation of it among the poor of many nations. By the report of that Society's committee, the 4th of May, 1808, it appears, that, in the course of the year then next preceding, their expenditures, in printing and circulating the word of God, amounted to more than fifty four thousand dollars.

Recent and authentic accounts assure us, that Societies, for the same excellent purposes, have lately been formed also, in various parts of the British United Kingdom; and, upon the continent, in Switzerland, in Germany, in Prussia, and in Denmark.

Nor are the exertions of the pious, in Great Britain, confined

to the European division of the old continent. Vast sums are annually expended in translating the Christian scriptures into the oriental tongues. The way appears to be thus rapidly preparing to diffuse the knowledge of salvation, by a Redeemer, among many and great nations overwhelmed in the fatal superstitions and idolatry of heathenism. How animating, brethren, to every true friend of man, must be the hope of incalculable good, which may be reasonably expected from such expanded and well directed effusions of Christian benevolence!

By these examples of our brethren in Europe, and by the fairest prospect of great usefulness, the attention of many in the United States has already been fixed upon the same object. Careful enquiries have been excited into the necessity of similar institutions, on this side of the Atlantic. Their result, as far as they have been yet pursued, has presented affecting testimony to the urgent need of Bible Societies in our country. At every step of the examination, additional evidence has been produced, and additional hope created, that unspeakable good may here be accomplished by such institutions.

Accordingly, our Christian brethren of different denominations, in Philadelphia, have within a few months, formed a Bible Society, for that city and its vicinity. We feel a strong persuasion, that the more accurately the present want of bibles, among the poor in every district of our country, is investigated, the clearer will be the evidence supporting a hope, that consequents,

happy beyond our conception, will follow from multiplying societies for circulating, as universally as possible, the written testimonies of the Most High.

To obtain the means, and to perform the work, of putting the bible into the hands of those indigent people who have it not, and who seem not likely, soon, if ever, to feel themselves able to purchase it, is the single object of forming the Society, that here addresses you. For this sole purpose, we solicit your aid, by the various talents which the Lord has committed to you for use.

We dare not, indeed, affirm, that, in *every* instance, we shall be able to select the most suitable objects of your charity. But we dare, and we *do*, promise *fidelity*, as stewards of the Lord's property entrusted to our disposal.

Will it be objected, that societies, for the *sort* of charity here proposed, have not, in *past* ages, been deemed necessary; and that there appears to be no extraordinary need of them, at the present day? We readily concede the correctness of both the articles stated in the objection: And it deeply affects us, that truth demands the concession: But we are, by no means, prepared to allow it to be thence inferred, that indispensable duty does not *now* require the institution and the labors of Bible Societies. To us, the *contrary* appears to be the only correct conclusion.

While we are persuaded, that the universal diffusion of the holy Scriptures would have been always useful, we do not feel ourselves concerned to show, in this address, *why* their general

distribution was, in former ages, so little regarded. Our duty is not with the generations that have passed into the world of immutable and righteous retributions, but with the *living* of our own age—and, in a sense, that must affect every considerate mind, with generations to come.

We believe it, however, to be unquestionable, that the Christian world has never had opportunities, of distributing the bible, equally favourable with those which present themselves to the present generation. The increased facility of intercommunication between all the parts and nations of the civilized world is the reason of this fact. Ought we not, therefore, abstaining from every delusive reflection on the *past*, to enquire, as in the presence of our Judge, what can now be done, most effectually to promote the good of the present and following generations? And must not the circulation of the scriptures, bringing salvation, among those that do not possess the means of an acquaintance with them, be placed on the list of works, the most useful in our power?

Is it not, in the highest degree desirable, that every person capable of intelligent reading should have opportunities of continual access to the holy scriptures? We believe, that none will answer, No, but the misguided papist, and the fool, that "hath said in his heart, there is no God." Such, however, we do not here address.

Are there not many individuals and families capable of intelligent reading, who are *now* destitute of these scriptures? That

there are, we feel the strongest assurance.

Once more we ask, has not God placed, in the hands of the well disposed among us, abundant means of furnishing such destitute people with the treasures of his holy word? The true answer to this question is so plain, that it need not be expressed.

Will it be objected, that the want of bibles is their own fault! Be it so. They are surely to be pitied the more. They are under a more pressing necessity of aid by your bounty and your prayers. All sin is the fault of him who commits it, and of him only. But is the sinner not therefore the object of charity? We trust you will never admit such an opinion. Is not that very sin of carelessness, which arises from native opposition of heart to the word, and law, and character of God, the deplorable article which forms the necessity of charity? Is it not the fault, the sin, of mankind, that renders charity in *temporal* things, necessary? Nay, was it not the fault of man, suffering in ruins by sin, which rendered necessary that unparalleled charity displayed by our "God manifest in the flesh?" Did he not teach the way of life, and shed his blood, to guide, to redeem, and to save the *guilty*? Be it, therefore, understood, that this society has been formed with the especial intention and hope of doing good to those who are poor, and ignorant, and careless, and perishing, through their own fault. It is for the benefit of none, but the guilty before God, that we now address you.

Does it concern *us*—does it

concern *you*, brethren—to know, that the objects of this charity *might* have done better? Should it not rather be sufficient to call forth our exertions for their highest welfare, to know, that their condition—no matter, as to us, by what causes—is indeed lamentable; and that the Lord has put into our hands the means of their relief?

But, perhaps, on a superficial view of the subject, some may apprehend, that there is no need of a Bible Society in *this* part of our country. Let it be therefore considered, whether there be not as *really* a necessity of such an institution, in Connecticut, as in any other section of the Christian world. The rational prospect of doing good is always a call for exertion. Is there not such a prospect before *us*, at the present time, and in the method here adopted?

We feel, indeed, emotions of the liveliest gratitude to God for reason to believe, that, in the more ancient settlements of New-England, and especially in Connecticut, there *is* comparatively *less* need of this charity, than in any other extensive portion of the Christian world. We believe, that the bible is more universally circulated here, than in any other country.

We bless God, that this part of America was first cultivated by men, who venerated the inspired scriptures, and who pressed them to their hearts as an invaluable treasure.

We bless God, that, by means of their institutions and laws founded on his word, the bible was placed in families so generally; and that, in this particular, their posterity have so care-

fully followed their pious steps. We esteem it an admirable regulation, that, by public authority, the select men of the respective towns are required to be certain, that, in every family, there be at least one bible. To us, however, this law, even on the supposition that it is as punctually executed as other laws are, on moral and religious subjects, appears not to contain any provision for such as have no bibles and are *unable to purchase* them. It only provides for compelling those that are destitute of bibles to buy them for themselves. But it directs the indigent to no charitable fund, from which they may hope to be helped, by public bounty, to the enjoyment of God's word. How shall *such* become possessors of the best book? We bless God, that every family in Connecticut is within the limits of some school district; and that our civil laws enjoin the daily reading of the holy scriptures in every district school of the state.

We bless God for numerous missionary institutions; and particularly for the society of this state, together with all divine smiles on their labors, in doing good by their instrumentality to many souls perishing with lack of gospel privileges. To send both the preached and written word of life to the new and destitute settlements is their great object. In the accomplishment of this, they have already done much. They have the most pleasing prospects of doing yet much more. But the field of want is extensive and vast. In comparison with this, their means of supply are scan-

ty and few. They cannot do more than a small part of that, which it is desirable to *have* done, in these works of divine love. In the charity we solicit, we claim to come forward, "as helpers together with them," in extending the knowledge of saving truth.

For all the good, that has already been done, and which, there is reason to hope, will hereafter be done by associations for the distribution of religious tracts, we also ascribe praise unto the "Father of Light." These associations have, by the blessing of God, been found very successful auxiliaries of the best cause in which men ever engaged. Our object is, likewise in its nature and tendency, one with theirs. While they conduct the destitute to the *streams*; we would bring them to the only *fountain* of valuable truth.

We rejoice to bear it in mind, that saving "faith cometh by *hearing*"; that the *preaching* of the gospel is the grand appointment of Jesus for "bringing many sons and daughters," to everlasting glory. At the same time, we remember the command of Christ, "Search the scriptures." And the Bereans are much commended for their daily diligence in the study of God's word.

Would you, therefore, hope, brethren, to have "religion, pure and undefiled before God," flourish more and more in your own hearts, and in the world extensively, should it not be your care to read the scriptures with devout frequency and attention; and as far as possible help *others* to the means of thus profitably

reading them? Is it not an alarming truth, that little benefit is to be expected from gospel preaching, if the bible is not *much* read in the family, and in the closet?

We rejoice to say, that, principally by a divine blessing on the foregoing means, the holy oracles are, we apprehend, *more generally* enjoyed by the families of Connecticut, than of any other spot on the globe. We are persuaded, however, that, notwithstanding all the care, already mentioned, both of our pious fathers and of our brethren in the civil and ecclesiastical departments, to give every person an opportunity of freely reading the sacred volume, many are, this day, destitute of that book, whose truths, correctly understood and affectionately embraced, give present peace and un-failing hope.

That there are many families and individuals, capable of reading with intelligence, who do not possess the holy scriptures, and to whom, by means of this Society, you can send them, will, we believe, become evident, whenever you fairly examine the subject. Even a *doubt* is impossible, that at the *Northward* and *Westward* many may be found who have no bibles. Nor can it be justly doubted, that, in those newly settled districts, family connexions are continually forming by indigent, but industrious, young people, either without care, or without feeling ability, to obtain that best of all books, which makes the soul "wise unto salvation." By our agency you can send *them* the bible, if it shall prove impossible to find suitable objects of

your charity in the old settlements.

But, brethren, are you sufficiently acquainted with facts to decide, that, even in *this* portion of our country—a portion of the world blessed, as we have already seen, in a superior degree, with the means of divine knowledge, there is not great need of the charity here contemplated? We call on our brethren, of every denomination, in the holy ministry—we call on our brethren in the churches of the Lord Jesus—to say, whether there cannot be found, in every ecclesiastical society, and among the people of every Christian persuasion, a number of houses in which there is no bible? That there *can*, is our real, though painful, belief. This belief is not founded upon mere conjecture. A personal acquaintance with sundry facts—an acquaintance which is not the result of extensive enquiry—confirms our apprehensions, that, in the whole state, such instances are not few. Thus, casting an anxious eye over both the old settlements and the new, we behold ample room for the exercise of this pious charity; and our impressions of its necessity are equal, in strength, with our reasons for believing, *that all should read the bible.*

Brethren, God has commanded you to "love your neighbor as yourselves." Must you not, then, feel it to be your duty to God, as well as to your fellow creatures, to bestow upon the destitute among them the invaluable riches of his word? And in what way can you hope so successfully to perform this duty, as by the agency of a Bible Society?

The nature of the cause and the perishing condition of many, who, through either indigence or indifference, are destitute of the volume bringing "Life and immortality to light," are our arguments. How deplorable must be the state and the prospects of those multitudes, who pass through their only probation, and die, without possessing even the *means* of a saving acquaintance with "the Lord that bought them!"

Both in the midst of you, and afar off, must, therefore, be seen and felt very urgent occasions for that charity, which we now propose and solicit.

It shall be *our* care to find the individuals and families, who, in our judgment, need to have bibles given them. On such, by your assistance, we will bestow that precious book. We engage to do this with the utmost impartiality. If the requisite means shall be furnished, persons of every description, and of every denomination, and of every occupation, whether bond or free—whom we shall judge capable of profiting by the possession of God's written word—whom we shall find destitute of it—and who, as far as we can discern, will probably not soon, if ever, obtain it, unless aided by this Society—shall be partakers of your sacred bounty. But, we trust, you will find the Society's plan of operation delineated sufficiently and satisfactorily in the constitution annexed to this address.

We beg leave therefore, brethren, to repeat our earnest invitation, that you very seriously consider the object of the Society. Is there not great need,

even here, of such an institution? Are not the purposes it would accomplish, in the highest degree, interesting and important? Can there be named, within the reach of human conception, any other method of charity, in which, as Christians—as friends to the welfare of mankind in both worlds—and as accountable to God for the use of every talent—you may hope to do equal good, as in helping the ignorant to the knowledge of those blessed truths, which concern their everlasting peace? Entire and strong in our confidence, that there is not. Does not, then, the great object of the Society deserve your cordial approbation? Has it not rightful—has it not invincible, claims to your active patronage? While thousands and millions, in ways utterly unjustifiable and criminal, are devouring wealth and throwing away life for worldly crowns and conquest; shall it not be ours and yours, by means, in all respects, righteous, and consistent with the worldly welfare of every person, to guide souls unto that Jesus, who can make them victorious over sin—who can pluck them from the hand of eternal death—and place upon their heads the crown of life?

View the *necessity* of exertions for this glorious purpose. See precious souls hastening to the bar of eternal judgment, while destitute of the bible to guide them in safety and triumph before that tribunal. See many of the rising generation, because without the bible to restrain and instruct them, preparing, as their years increase, to perpetrate crimes of every de-

scription—to suffer the evils of extreme infamy and wretchedness, on earth—and to render their existence an abiding curse, by “falling into the hands of the living God,” who is unchangeably “angry with the wicked.” See, placed in your own hands, the *means* of bestowing upon them “the words of eternal life.” By the strong light which shines, in the bible, from the awful world of retribution, behold the greatness, the permanency, and the richness, of the treasure you bestow, when you give them the holy scriptures.

Are not charities, in things pertaining to the body, though often necessary, utterly worthless, in comparison with this? *Their* fashion passes away.—*They* soon perish with using.—But the “Word of the Lord endureth for ever;” and the book, containing that word is an article easily preserved.

Perhaps you can bestow no favor, which will be less liable than this to be alienated by ungodly traffic. If, in a few instances, the wretch, who has received it by your charity, shall thus contemptuously dispose of it, still it will pass into the hands of others, to whom it may prove infinitely profitable. Pearls, tho’ trampled under foot by him who perceives not their value, are pearls nevertheless. They may be gathered up by another, who will be both able and willing to discern their intrinsic worth.

By giving the bible to the proper objects of this charity, you give them the means of an acquaintance with their own ruin by sin; and with the way of their redemption by an almighty Saviour. You thus put into their

possession the field containing “the pearl of great price.”—Whether they discover, and affectionately *secure*, that pearl, and become rich for eternity; or whether they *reject* the offered inheritance; are articles, we apprehend, which do not, in the least, affect the *duty* of us and of you.

By giving them the bible, you bring, to their very doors, the treasury of the “true riches.”—You lay before them the pages revealing the “wisdom, that is from above; that is profitable to direct; that is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

By giving them the bible, you give them the “law of the Lord, which is perfect, converting the soul.” You give them “the statutes of the Lord, which are the songs of the righteous in the house of their pilgrimage.”—You give them opportunities of knowing the *judgments*—the holy and immutable *decisions*—of the Lord, concerning both godliness and sin. By these decisions they will be warned of “wrath unto the uttermost” against the impenitent. By these they will be called to the post of duty and safety.

By giving them the bible, you give them a lamp for their path—a “light for their feet” amidst that, thick darkness with which sin involves their way, through the probationary life. Under the insupportable pressure of their wretchedness, you give them an infallible directory to “the consolations of God which are neither few nor small.”

By this, your bounty, they

may learn the way of that eternal hope, which is an "anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast," amidst the tempests and the tossings of "the present evil world and which shall never make ashamed." You give them a guide which cannot deceive them, to that "godliness, which is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." In a word, you give them those records of everlasting truth, on the knowledge and love of which their salvation depends.

We know, brethren, that you fully believe the truth of all these declarations. With seriousness therefore, realizing these truths as practical, must you not find them replete with the weightiest motives to engage in this benevolent work? What charity to the poor deserves even to be named in comparison with giving them the bible? Why should you be unreasonably concerned to foresee, whether every individual will make a good use of the inestimable treasure, you put into his hands, when you give him this book of the living God?

Rather accompany your charity with fervent importunity in prayer, that the renewing and saving influences of God's Holy Spirit may go with the truths of his holy word. Thus may you rejoice in a divine hope, that, in doing your duty to your fellow creatures who *need* your assistance; whom you are *able* to assist; and whom you must *meet* at the bar of Christ; you will be found to have been, in the Lord's hand, instrumental of present good, and of eternal salvation to souls. How un-ut-

terable the joy of such a hope! "Inasmuch," will the Judge declare, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

Finally, brethren, pray for us. Pray for the prosperity of Zion. Pray that the gracious guidance and blessing of the Most High may render effectual, to the salvation of multitudes, the many efforts, that are making to diffuse over the habitable globe, the knowledge of the holy scriptures. Pray that the "word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified—that his name and his praise may be one—and that his kingdom may come, and his will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."

Constitution of the Connecticut Bible Society.

ARTICLE I. The Society shall be styled, The Connecticut Bible Society. The circulation of the holy scriptures shall be its only object. The common version of the bible, and impressions that combine cheapness with plainness, without Note or Comment, shall be selected. In the accomplishment of this great object, the Society shall be at liberty to co-operate, as opportunities shall offer, with any other Societies formed for the same purpose.

II. The annual payment of Three Dollars shall constitute the person paying that sum, a member of the Society: And the payment of Forty Dollars shall constitute the person, ad-

vancing that sum, a member for life, without any further payments.

III. Every member of the Society shall be entitled to receive two bibles annually, provided he apply for the same, to the directing committee, within six months from the time of the annual meeting.

IV. Any sums of money which shall, at any time, be subscribed and paid, either smaller or larger than those necessary to constitute membership, will be thankfully accepted, and, with religious strictness, appropriated in the same manner with the monies which shall be paid by the members themselves.

V. A committee of seven, called, The Directing Committee, shall be chosen yearly.— Guided by the first article, they shall purchase bibles, and superintend the distribution of them for the Society. They shall meet in Hartford, as soon as convenient, after they shall be chosen; and thence by their own adjournments through the year. A majority shall constitute a quorum for business; and two may adjourn from day to day. They shall choose, of their number, a moderator and a clerk, for a term not less than one year. The clerk shall record the doings of the Committee, and lay them before the Society, at its annual meetings.

VI. The Society shall annually choose a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. At every meeting, the president; or if he be absent, the vice president; or if both be absent, a member chosen for the

session, shall preside. The secretary shall keep a record of all the Society's doings, and shall correspond in their name.

VII. The treasurer shall keep the accounts of the Society, receive their monies; pay the orders of the directing committee; and annually report, to the Society, the state of their funds.

VIII. No person, holding an office, or offices, under this Society, shall receive any pecuniary compensation for his services.

IX. The stated annual meeting of the society shall be holden, in the city of Hartford, on the second Thursday of May, at nine o'clock in the morning. A majority of the members present shall be competent to the transaction of business. An extraordinary meeting of the Society may be called by the president; or, in case of his disability, by the vice president; at the request of twelve members. Notice of such meeting shall be given in, at least, two newspapers of Connecticut; and as much as two months previous to the holding of the said meeting.

X. Two thirds of the members present in any annual meeting may make alterations and amendments of this constitution.

[Here follows in the original, a subscription proposal.]

Note of the Editor The preceding address on the subject of a Bible Society was communicated, with a request that it might be inserted in the Magazine. The editor thinking the design important cheerfully complied with the request.

On a Christian love of God.

OUR divine lawgiver hath told us, as a rule of life, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and prophets." This is the same command as was before given by Moses, the lawgiver of the Hebrew nation, from which we may determine that true religion is essentially the same, under the Jewish and Christian dispensations. This is a summary description of the Christian temper, and all the duties required from us by the law of God. To understand this law and whether we obey it, are subjects of infinite importance, on which our personal salvation depends, so that they can never cease to be interesting.

As men are very liable to be deceived in the moral nature of their own exercises, mistaking those for gracious which flow from a deceived heart, in several of his discourses, our Saviour very emphatically described a Christian love, and how it may be distinguished from counterfeit affections. The following admirable words were spoken and penned with this design,—
 "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive,

what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be called the children of the Highest: For he is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."—This exhortation of Christ plainly describes two kinds of love; one is compared to the love and mercy of God, and must, therefore, be of a holy nature; the other is such as sinners mutually exercise, in the intercourse of this world, and in its moral qualities very unlike to those sanctified affections, which are wrought by the Spirit of God in the hearts of his people.

In this description the love of the unsanctified is expressed by—
 "Loving those who love them; doing good to others that the benefit may be returned; lending to them of whom they hope to receive, that they may receive as much again." Concerning this love he says, if ye exercise it, what thank have ye? What moral virtue or excellency of the heart doth it discover? It is merely a bargain of selfishness, in which the worst of men may interchange benefits from such motives, as neither deserve gratitude, nor are evidence of an upright heart. The most sinful, who have no motive higher than their own pleasure or gain, are often found united in seeming friendship, and the exercise of mutual benefits. On first view, it appears as though they were governed by the purest love, and their favors granted, merely to make the receiver happy;

when, if we could search their hearts, it would be seen that nothing is further from their intentions. The union is one of interest, and nothing done or given without an expectation of being repaid. Under the government of this principle, they are friends or enemies as self-interest points, without any regard to Christian obligation.

A Christian love is very differently described. It is to love our enemies, and to do them good, and lend, not hoping to receive again, whereby we shall resemble God himself, who is kind to the evil and unthankful. Doing good to enemies, who by an unkind return injure their benefactors, must proceed from a higher motive than a regard to self interest: this is Christian benevolence. It is a resemblance of the love of God, who gave his Son to die for men while they were enemies, sends his rain and causes sunshine on the unthankful, and offers the salvation and glory of the gospel to those, who being enemies of his kingdom live in disobedience.

The difference between these two kinds of love, is so explicitly marked in our Saviour's discourse, that every one who attends to the subject must perceive a reason for the distinction. The first is a modification of self love or kindness to others with a sole regard to our own interest, which may be found in the proud, the dishonest, and in all who have opportunity or art to make others subservient to their own interest. There is a general conviction in mankind that this disposition merits no thanks. Although in persons thus influ-

enced, there may be the external appearance of union, they do, in fact, feel no mutual confidence, except what depends on circumstances, which this day may exist and to-morrow be changed. This selfish love constitutes the whole union which can subsist between ungodly minds.

The second, or Christian love, arises either from a sight of moral excellency in the beloved object, which is commonly called a love of complacency; or it is a desire for the best good of all, who are capable of happiness and glory, which is called a love of benevolence: each of these is Christian love, of a holy nature, and not depending on any accidental or mutable union of personal interest.

Having described the two kinds of love, which Christ meant in his discourse on this subject, one of which is Christian holiness, the other merely a selfish affection, which may coexist with great hardness of heart, every reader ought to apply the subject in self examination, whether he hath that love of God, which will issue in eternal life. We cannot make too strict enquiry in a point of such infinite consequence. Have we any true love of God? There is reason to fear many imagine they have, who will find themselves deceived, when they pass the strict scrutiny of a heart-searching judge.

There are various sources from which a false opinion of our own integrity may arise. The satisfaction we have taken, in innumerable blessings received from a divine hand, may lead us to suppose we love their

author. Men are generally indoctrinated in the opinion of a supreme creator and governor of the world, who preserves life, dispenses favors, and saves from evils to which all are constantly exposed. The most unholy may be in a habit of conceiving their blessings to be a divine gift; they are conscious of innumerable favors from a dispensing Providence, and may have the same love of God as one sinner hath to another for some actual or expected benefit. From the same motive they may love the law of God, esteeming it a protection of their persons and properties, and a defence against the injuries of other men: or conceiving his government favorable to their designs, they may be pleased that he is on the throne. These affections may be strongly exercised without any just view of God's holiness, the righteousness of his law, or the great designs he is accomplishing by his infinitely wise government. The Lord appoints and delights in his own government for its holiness, bestows blessings on guilty men as a testimony of his grace, and to lead them to a new life of repentance and good works; while sinners delight therein for his bountiful goodness, which they improve as means of gratifying an evil disposition. Thus there may be a sensible love of God arising wholly from the common principles of depravity. This kind of love, in some instances, may produce the zeal of worship and carefulness in the external duties of religion, doing this for God, in selfish expectation of receiving a reward. In some, this is the source of a

false opinion that they love God, while they are entirely destitute of Christian obedience.

Sinful men, often doctrinally misconceive the character of God, which leads directly to a false opinion that they love him. The most ignorant are conscious that they are in the hand and under the power of the Lord. Anticipating his punishment of those to whom he is opposed, it becomes very desirable to think he is altogether such an one as themselves; that he approves of such ways as please them, will bear with their vices and neglect of piety, and by no means very strictly mark and punish iniquity. Such opinions, and the prophet, who prophesies safe things, are kindly entertained, and misconceptions of the divine character are increased by that ignorance of moral glory, which necessarily exists in sinful minds. Ignorance of the glory of holiness, together with an unwillingness to be separated from sin, conspire to form and perpetuate a most dangerous scheme of sentiments. The Lord whom they love is not the holy one of Israel; but a God falsely formed, by their vain imaginations. It is not he whose grace is glorious in holiness, who requires men to be meek, humble, filled with self denial, chaste, temperate, penitent, obedient in Christ Jesus, renouncing their own righteousness and wholly consecrated to his glory. Let their false opinions of the character of God be corrected, and the opinion that they love him would instantly cease.

Misconceptions of the nature and offer of grace in the gospel, is another source of men's false

hope that they love God. Consciousness of guilt and fear of punishment readily attract notice of the grace offered to a guilty world; while depravity of heart renders men slow to learn, that they have no right to hope, until they are washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God. They overlook the necessity of repentance and faith issuing in a holy life, to obtain the promises. The most sinful are pleased with the gospel of reconciliation, until they understand the holiness of its doctrines and duties. Until they find the necessity of a renewal in heart to become members in Christ Jesus, they will love God for the offers of redemption through the blood of his Son. This temper leads directly to misapprehensions of the nature and offers of forgiving grace. Attempting to unite safety with the reigning power of sin, holiness of heart is dropped from the Christian character. Some imagine the gracious offer to be so extensive as will embrace all, however sinful they remain; some suppose the gospel was designed to relax our obligation to be holy in all things; some, that as we are justified through a Saviour's righteousness, there is no necessity for salvation, that we should be personally holy; while others content themselves with the sound of grace and mercy, not even making an enquiry, whether any thing must be done by us to give a title to the promises. These false ideas of the nature and offers of pardon from God, excite a selfish love of him for the grace there is in the gospel, in many who have nei-

ther the temper of Christ, nor the faith by which his children live and are purified. In all these cases sinful men, according to their own imagination, may love God, supposing he loves them; while in its nature, it is not different from the love sinners may have one for another. How different are these false affections from that delight in the moral excellency of God which is seen by his saints! For his benefits they are grateful, sensible that these deserve their praise and are evidence of his infinite goodness; while for the moral glories of his nature they adore him. His character is lovely in their sight; when this is beheld they are satisfied, and when he is glorified their will is done. If, in covenant faithfulness, he denies the blessings of time; still they know he is righteous, and their obligation to serve him doth not depend on the circumstance of his benefits to them being granted or denied. For the same reasons they love his law and government. To them the great excellency of that freedom, which we receive in the gospel, appears to be a previous deliverance from the reigning power of sin. This love of God is different, in its whole nature, in its primary qualities, and in all its effects, from loving him through a presupposed opinion that he will do them good as a merited fruit of their own services. The former is a testimony of the heart to the infinite glory of God; the latter is merely an exercise of a forbidden self love, which is common to all sinful beings, moves them in all they do, and will be both their punishment and sin, when

infinite justice denies what they now unmeritedly receive, and gives them up to reap the fruit of what they have sowed. Let not a question of such importance, as the sincerity or insincerity of our love to God, rest on having been once determined favorably for ourselves; let us remember that the heart is treacherous above all things, and search out its deceitful excuses; let us reflect that many, who in the end tremble at the thought of meeting a holy God, had lived without a doubt that there foundation stood strong, until they were shaken by death and the prospect of immediately entering eternity.

P—S.

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Directions for Self-Examination.

(Concluded from p. 148.)

HAVING thus examined my faith, let me proceed impartially to examine the FRUITS AND EFFECTS OF MY FAITH. Many pretend to faith whose works give the lie to their pretensions; let me, therefore, *shew my faith by works.* James ii. 18.

II. Quest. WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF FAITH? Does it produce those effects which the word of God points out as the proof and evidence of its sincerity, with respect to my conscience, my heart, and my life?

1. *What are the effects of my faith, as to my conscience?* The scripture says, *We have believed, and do enter into rest.* Hebrew. iv. 3. Do I rest from any former legal attempts to justify myself,

going about to establish my own righteousness? Am I satisfied with Christ's righteousness, as a complete title to glory? I read of *peace in believing*; have I peace in my conscience? Being justified by faith, have I *peace with God*? When my soul is alarmed with the remembrance of former sins, or those lately committed, how do I obtain peace? Is it by forgetting them as soon as I can, and then fancying that God has forgotten them too? Is it by resolving to do so no more, and so making future obedience atone for past offences? Is it by performing religious duties, and so making amends? Or, is it by a fresh application to the pardoning, peace speaking blood of Christ? When my sins stare me in the face, and my duties themselves appear sins, whence, O my soul! proceeds thy comfort? *Is it the blood of Christ, my sacrifice, that purges my conscience from dead works?* Does faith, in the atonement of his death, free me from the dreadful apprehensions of condemnation and wrath due to sin? Do I, or do I not, believe that *God is reconciled*, through the death of his Son, and therefore look up to him with freedom and delight? If I have not this peace, why is it? What hinders? Either I do not clearly understand the nature of the gospel, or I do not fully believe it; for it provides for every possible case. If I have this, blessed be God for it! Lord help me to keep it, that it may keep me! Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

2. *I should try what are the effects of my faith, as to my HEART, and its affections.*

(1.) *Do I love God, God the father?* Do I think of him, and go to him as a loving father, in Christ? Have I the spirit of adoption, so that I cry *abba father*? Do I love him as the father of mercies, the God of hope, the God of peace, the God of love?

(2.) *Do I love Christ?* To those who believe he is precious. Is he precious to me? Do I see infinite beauty in his person? Is he the chief among ten thousand to me, and altogether lovely? Do I admire the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of his love? Is it the language of my very soul, *none but Christ, none but Christ*? Is it my grief and shame, that I love him no more?

(3.) *Do I love the Holy Spirit?* (Rom. xv. 30.) Do I honour him, as the great author of light, life, grace, and comfort? Do I maintain a deep sense of my dependence on his divine agency, in all my religious performances? Do I desire my heart to be his temple? Am I cautious lest I quench his holy motions, or grieve him by my sins? Am I sensible, that without his influences I cannot pray, hear, read, communicate, nor examine myself as I ought?

(4.) *Do I love God's law?* Do I delight in the law of the Lord, after the inward man, not wishing it less strict and holy, but because it is holy? Am I as willing to take Christ for my king to rule over me, as for my priest to atone for me? Do I hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do I pant, and long, and pray to be holy? Do I wish to be holy, as I wish to be happy? Do I hate all sin, especially

that sin which most easily besets me, and labour daily to mortify it, and to deny myself? Do I sigh for complete deliverance from remaining corruption, and rejoice in the hope of it, through a holy Jesus? Do I long for heaven, that there I may be satisfied with his likeness?

(5.) *Do I love God's people?* Can I say to Christ, as *Ruth* to *Nuomi*, *thy people shall be my people*? Do I love them because they love Christ, and bear his image? Do I feel an union of spirit with them, though they may not be of my party, or think exactly as I do? Can I say, *I know that I have passed from death to life, because I love the brethren*?

3. *What are the effects of my faith, as to my daily WALK and CONVERSATION?* The word of God tells me, that he who is in Christ, is *a new creature*; *old things are passed away, all things are become new*. If ye love me, said Christ, *keep my commandments*. Let me review the decalogue, and see how my love to Christ is manifested by my obedience.

(1.) Do I know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and *my God*; and do I worship and glorify him accordingly? Is he the supreme object of my desire and delight? Do I trust him, hope in him, love to think of him? Do I pray to him, do I praise him, am I careful to please him?

(2.) Do I receive, observe, and keep pure and entire all such religious worship, and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word? How is it with me in secret prayer, in family prayer, in public prayer? With what

views do I go to hear the preached gospel ; and what good do I get by it ?

(3.) Do I make a holy and reverend use of God's names, titles, attributes, ordinances, word and works ; avoiding the profanation of or abuse of any thing whereby God makes himself known ?

(4.) Do I keep holy to God the Sabbath day ; resting *all* that day from wordly employments recreations, and conversation ? And do I spend *the whole time* in public and private exercises of divine worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy ? Is the sabbath my delight ; and are the ordinances of God's house very precious to my soul ?

(5.) Do I endeavour to preserve the honour, and perform all the duties which I owe to my *superiors, inferiors, or equals* ; remembering, that true religion makes good husbands, wives, children, masters and servants ? If I am *really* holy, I am *relatively* holy.

(6.) Do I use all lawful means to preserve my own life, and the life of others ? Do I avoid all intemperance ? Do I resist a passionate temper ? Do I labour to promote the welfare of men's souls ? Do I exercise love, compassion, and succour to the poor and distressed, according to my ability ? Can I, and do I freely forgive those who have injured me ? Can I, and do I pray for them ? and instead of hating, do I love my very enemies ?

(7.) Do I earnestly strive to preserve my own and my neighbour's chastity, in *heart, speech* and *behaviour*, avoiding all the

incentives of lust, such as intemperance in food, lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, plays, and debauched company ; remembering that my body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ?

(8.) Do I use the lawful means of moderately procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of myself and others ? Do I abhor every species of robbery and injustice ? Am I strictly and conscientiously honest in all my dealings, not over-reaching or defrauding any person, in any degree ?

(9.) Do I studiously maintain and promote TRUTH, between man and man ; not only abhorring perjury, but hating all falsehood ? And do I, as a professor of religion, avoid both ludicrous and pernicious lies, being as tender of my neighbour's character as of my own ? Am I very *cautious* of making promises, and very *careful* to keep them ?

(10.) Am I contented with the condition God has allotted me, believing that he orders all things for the best ? And do I avoid, as much as possible, envying my neighbour's happiness, or inordinately desiring any thing that is his ?

And now, dear reader, what is the result of your inquiry ? Have you made a solemn pause at the close of every question, and obtained an honest answer ? And are you, notwithstanding many unallowed imperfections, able to conclude, that your faith is of God's operation ; and proved so to be, by its holy fruits of peace, love, and obedience ? Then take the comfort, and give God the glory.

But if, on the other hand, the evidence of scripture and con-

science is against you, and you are forced to conclude, that your heart is not right with God; then, for God's sake, and for your soul's sake, cry instantly, and mightily to him, to have mercy upon you, and change your heart; remembering, that though your case is awful, it is not desperate; and that still, you, even you, coming to Christ, shall in no wise be cast out.



General observations on the Laws of Moses.

(Continued from p. 142.)

THE statutes and judgments prescribed for the Israelites, embraced various objects, and upon examination, will appear to be excellently adapted to attain them. As a system of religious doctrine none can exceed them, acknowledging one only living and true God, and requiring the worship, love and service of him, with all the heart and soul. As a system of religious instruction in good things to come, the blessings of redemption by Christ, their significance and adaptedness, it is hoped, has been illustrated in the preceding explanation. As a system of political and civil regulation, the subordination they require, the inviolable respect for the rights of justice and equity they every where inculcate, the spirit of philanthropy, they inspire, and the protection and compassion they extend to the fatherless and the widow, the servant, the poor and the stranger, render them infinitely superior to all human systems,

and worthy of their divine author.

But it is not so much to illustrate the superior excellence of the Mosaic economy, as a system of religious and moral practice, nor of civil policy, as to exempt particular regulations from the reflection of being weak and trifling, to which they are exposed from the caprice of some and the ignorance of many. As specimens of the regulations now contemplated may be produced, those which relate to meats, clean and unclean, to dress, that women should not put on that which pertaineth to men, nor men put on the garments of women—to agriculture that they should not yoke an ass with an ox, nor sow their fields with different kinds of seed. These, with others of a similar kind, are obnoxious to censure, as frivolous, contemptible, and unworthy of the God of Israel. But to vindicate them from such aspersions, it is only necessary, it is presumed, to observe,

1. That God redeemed the nation of Israel to be a people peculiar to himself. By solemn, covenant transactions, God became their God, and they became his people, and separated from all the idolatry of the heathen. Conformably to this character, many regulations were prescribed as restraints from idolatrous superstition. For instance, idolatrous superstition had directed, that in worshipping the Gods, they should accommodate their dress to the God they worshipped to render themselves more acceptable. As, when men worshipped Venus, the goddess of beauty and pleasure, they should assume the

beautiful dress of women—when women worshipped Mars, the god of war, they should appear in the martial habit of men. Hence the prohibition, that men should not put on the dress of women, nor women the dress of men, became necessary, not only to prevent a practice so improper and indecent but also to preserve the Israelites from symbolizing in the superstitious rites of heathen. For the same reason, they were prohibited from rounding their heads in cutting off their hair, neither might they mar the corners of their beards, for these were idolatrous rites. Nor might they cut their flesh, for that was the practice in the worship of Baal. Nor might they print a mark in their flesh, for by that rite idolaters initiated themselves in the worship of their peculiar gods. Neither might they make garments of linen and woolen, nor yoke an ox with an ass, nor sow their fields with different kinds of seed. For by such commixtures, superstition taught idolaters, they recommended themselves to their gods and procured their smiles and blessings. However inferior and trifling, consequently, such regulations may appear to us, from the long disuse, and our ignorance of such heathenish customs, yet in the view of idolatrous superstition, they were particularly necessary and important, and God in prescribing such regulations, expressed a detestation of idolatrous rites, and an attention to preserve his people from them, highly worthy of himself, and infinitely honorable for his glorious character.

2. It was necessary and desirable, that their visible appearance should correspond with their visible character and relation.

According to solemn engagements, God was their God, and they were his people. God was holy, and their relation to him, made their holiness essentially necessary. Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. The law or ten commandments, engraven on the two tables of stone, was the standard of their moral rectitude, and required perfect holiness. But, separated from the idolatry of the heathen and brought near to God, a visible character, or appearance according with this relation, became peculiarly necessary and desirable. This might neither be dictated by human wisdom, nor exposed to the vanity of superstition. It pertained to the prerogative authority of God alone to resolve it. This was defined by a system of regulations, to them, irreversible and immutable. These extended to their whole external conduct, and constituted the standard of visible purity and pollution. Conforming to these prescribed rules of life and practice, they were visibly pure and holy, prepared to receive the expressions of divine favor, and God promised them his protection and blessing. If these were violated, they became visibly unholy, were disqualified for peculiar privileges and God hid his face from them. If it were an individual transgression, personal impurity was contracted and the transgressor should be put out of the camp. For God was of purer eyes than to look upon

any evil, and might see neither iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Isreal. As in the habitual employments and daily occurrences of life, pollutions might be contracted, which disqualified for special favors, rites of purification were instituted for the removal of them. When those were attended in the manner prescribed, the subject was purified, visibly restored to the favor of God, and the privileges of his people. At the same time, these ceremonial, external, visible impurities were peculiarly adapted to suggest to their minds, views of their moral defects and pollutions—as their rites of purification were designed to direct them to the great source of spiritual cleansing, the blood of Jesus. Their whole system consequently, consisting of moral precepts and ceremonial regulations, was eminently adapted to form and exhibit them agreeably to their holy profession and distinguished relation, as high above all people, holy to the Lord their God—and, walking in his statutes and judgments, and enjoying his protection and blessing, might extort the exclamation of Moses from every spectator: Happy art thou, O Israel, who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, who is the sword of thy excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CONNECTICUT MAGAZINE.

REV. SIR,

I WAS much pleased with a letter in your Magazine for April, from Mrs. Jerusha P—d, and with your remarks upon the same. Soon after reading the Magazine, I happened to take up a volume of the *Horæ Solitariae*, and was highly entertained with some remarks of the author upon the conversation of many professors of religion. Thinking them calculated to do good, and very well suited to follow the piece in your Magazine above alluded to, I venture to request you to insert them in your next number.

Yours, &c.

CLERUS.

The Remarks are as follows:

See *Hor. Sol.* Vol. 1. p. 162.

WE are sorry to own, but cannot deny, that there are many high and vain-glorious professors, who can talk about Christ, and dispute for hours together upon the peculiarities of his gospel, who, it may be feared, are little better than sounding brass, and tinkling cymbals. These are they, who give their tongue to God, but their very heart and souls to the spirit of the world: And therefore when their sound is over, all is over with them. They profess in order to speak, and they speak to shew their profession. By any other signs, we should not be able easily to distinguish them from the rest of the world.

It is to be deeply lamented too, among other things, that

professors are so little *alone* in these days, and not only do not practise but speak against frequent retirements from the world, which have been the usage and desire of good and wise men at all times. A man may as justly be expected to advance in learning, without silent reflection upon the subjects of knowledge; as a Christian can be supposed to proceed in the divine life or spiritual science, without frequent prayer and meditation. There is no studying in a croud; nor yet learning the things of God in the *constant* bustle and confusion of earthly affairs. The real Christians, who are providentially called into these matters, find to their cost so much inquietude and distraction of spirit, as should deter others from venturing into them without calling. A calmness of mind can scarce be expected in the midst of worldly storms: And therefore a Christian, who values his own peace, will endeavour to shun them, even though some, whom the apostle calls *busy-bodies*, (*περιεργαζόμενοι* *workers about and about, and yet about nothing*), may think it monkish and gloomy for a man to enjoy highly his God and his Bible, and be satisfied in these, without running after the follies and fopperies of mankind. But, if it be right to pray, that we may not be *lead into temptation*; surely, it can never be right, that we ourselves should freely *run* into it.

Too frequently likewise does the conversation of many persons degenerate into a mean and unfriendly detraction of the absent. It would be both evan-

gelical and decent, if St. *Augustine's* motto, for his table-talk, was made a more general rule for discourse:

Quisquis amat dictis absentum rodere vitam,

*Hanc mensam indignam noverit esse sibi **

Which may be rendered:

Whoever wounds an absent neighbour's fame,

No welcome seat at my repast shall claim.

Many appear to seek company, for the mere purpose of *shewing themselves* in company, and such never leave it, if they have their own will, without drawing discourse into debate and disputation: Just as if the shining in argument (though, as it frequently happens, such people are the most unfit of any by temper and education for the business) was the right way of obeying the precept, *to let our light shine before men*. Noisy, verbose, and incessant declamation, much oftener disgusts, than edifies, the hearts of the hearers. What *Lactantius* said of wisdom, may with great truth be said of grace, the highest wisdom; *non in lingua, sed in corde*, it does not lie in the tongue, but in the heart. It was a mystical statute of the law, that *every open vessel, which hath no covering bound upon it, is unclean*. By which it was signified, that not only every sinner, who is uncovered by the righteousness of Christ, is in a state of pollution; but also that every professor, every one thinking himself a vessel of the true sanc-

* See his *Life*, by *Passidonius*, at the head of his works.

tuary, who notwithstanding is open to the spirit and consequently to the filth of this world, is unholy and unseparated, in direct disobedience to the will of God. There are even proper reserves in common life: And in the Christian life they are still more necessary, till there be just occasions of speech; and then prayer for grace and wisdom should be offered, at least internally, that the speech may be *sound and seasoned with that salt*, which may on those occasions glorify God, and edify the hearer. What was said of gracious Hooper, Bp. of Gloucester, would be a becoming character to every Christian: "He was spare of diet, spare of words, and sparest of time." Besides; 'tis no part of a Christian's business, be he in public or private station, to *shew himself*, and to display his own little attainments (for they are but *little* at the most :) His duty it is to speak for his master, and even then with *meekness and fear*. "The soul (says the excellent archbishop Leighton,) that hath the *deepest sense* of spiritual things and the *truest knowledge* of God, is most afraid to miscarry in speaking of him, and is most tender and wary how to quit itself, when engaged to speak of and for him."* A Christian's life does not consist in outward dispute or babbling, but in inward faith and joy: And the surest way of losing his own comforts, is by an idle debate, in which he would appear the first actor, and display his own talents, or stir up his animal passions, under the conceit of doing it for God.—

* *Comment. upon 1 Pet. iii. 15.*

Non tali auxilio.—Truth finds a better advocate in the *heart* and *life* than in the *tongue*. An hypocrite may prate about the gospel; but the real Christian alone can live the gospel. Never therefore was the Psalmist's advice, and the Psalmist's practice, more necessary than in the present day: *Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.* SELAH, i. e. "Note it well."

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On Discipline in the Church of Christ.

AMONG many institutions in the Church of Christ for preventing sin and reclaiming the disobedient, one is a salutary discipline, or the use of certain warnings and punishments on those who either are, or are supposed to be transgressors of God's law, and who live inconsistently with the doctrines, and example of our Redeemer. Several kinds of discipline were used in the Jewish Church, which, in its time, was the true Church of God, of which no particular mention will now be made. In many discourses of our Saviour and precepts delivered by those who spoke under his authority, a salutary discipline was instituted. This was designed to reclaim offenders, and warn others against imitating their heresies and ungodly practice. The subject of discipline hath caused much contention in the Church from its establishment to the present day. It hath separated the Church general into several great parties, and caused animosities in particular churches, which were

wiped away only by the death of the actors. Passion can inflict punishment, while it is only patience and repentance can endure it. It is not the design of this paper to discuss the controverted points, where authority in the Church of Christ is vested, nor by whom censures and punishments ought to be inflicted ; neither certainly to determine the degree and extension of punishment, nor the evidence of repentance before an offender may be restored to the good charity of his brethren. Each of these would lead into a boundless field of controversy, while, after all, it is probable that each Church or confederacy of Churches would follow their own maxims. A point of much easier solution is now proposed. When Christians of every denomination agree there is a want of suitable discipline in the church of God, why is there no more efficacy in what they say, and so little energy in what they do. When pious men lament the fault ; when the most zealous of Christ's ministers preach ; when partizans for particular forms of discipline are ready to break union with their brethren, who cannot in all things see with them eye to eye ; when consistories, synods and the most dignified councils, in large branches of the church consult and address ; and when all consent they are right in the end proposed ; why is there no greater effect from all the exertion than we behold ?

If it be answered human depravity is the cause, this is doubtless true, but not a fair reply ; for the depravity of men, in a sense, is the cause of all the

evils, natural and moral, which have been in the world, from its beginning to the present day ; yet many successful efforts have been made to stem the overwhelming torrent of its effects.

To answer the enquiries we must resort to a more simple process of reasoning, and to stable facts. We must look to the character of those who compose, and are leading members in those particular churches where salutary discipline is neglected. The general duty is not observed, and in every instance of neglect, we shall see that a majority are afraid of the institution. If judgment begins at the house of God, they know not where it will end. Many are willing to see a brother condemned, especially, if there hath been any animosity existing ; to be condemned themselves would be very undesirable. Many are willing to have a brother's fault exposed who would not, for a world have their own characters scrutinized. One says, such a brother is an extortioner ; but he fears to bring the charge, lest, in the end, his own books of account should be examined. Another fears his neighbor hath spoken falsely ; but dare not begin an examination into sins of the tongue lest his own slander and enmity and unneighborly insincerities should be detected ; and still a third is pained lest some one, who is destitute of the grace of God should stain the communion to which he belongs ; but dare not speak, lest, in his own case, he should be unable to render a reason for the hope that is in him.

Others are deterred from

their duty, lest it should bring upon them the reputation of being censorious people, or injure their business, or break the connexion which their young people have with families, which they hold to be a little more respectable in the world than their own. Thus we are led to see the fountain from which hath flowed a neglect of salutary discipline in the church from its first promulgation. The institution is excellent, admirably adapted to reclaim offenders, and warn all men; its inefficacy arises from the weakness, consciousness of personal sin, and fears of worldly detriment, in those to whom the execution is committed; and in the present state of things, it is not seen to whom the power may be entrusted more safely. All are willing that others should be censured for their visible transgressions; all are convinced that an ordinance of discipline is very fit in the Church, and allow that a fault somewhere exists. What belongs to all is done by none. Some will go from house to house, lamenting and saying aspersive things of a brother, who is really guilty, and stops at this, thinking they have done their duty; whereas they have departed from it. Their propagation of the scandal farther than it had reached before, was a wrong thing, until they had previously used the means of discipline as we find them appointed by the great head of the church. Suggestions of evil ought not to be made, where there is no evidence which will substantiate the thing, before a proper board for judgment. This is corrupting the blood with-

out healing the wound; neither is it a sufficient excuse, that the minister hath been verbally informed. Verbal information doth not authorize a minister to arraign any one either before himself or the church. A church process requires a more substantial way of proceeding or it would soon degenerate into confusion, and perhaps into oppression.

What shall then be done? Is all discipline in the church of Christ to be forborne? by no means. On whom doth the duty devolve? On all. All in their places, ought to be active, watchful and filled with brotherly love; for it is brotherly love excites to the only discipline, which will be for the glory of God and the good of souls.

We never yet saw a church process which proceeded from antecedent contentions in the neighborhood concerning character and property, or from bitter civil controversies, that terminated either in the prosperity of the Church or the spiritual good of the parties concerned. The reason is plain why this is the case; such ecclesiastical procedures arise from enmity and revenge and not from a spirit of brotherly love.

Neither are we to expect that processes in the church should originate from the instigation of its officers. Every member in the church, either doth or ought to think its officers, whether they be minister, elder, deacon, or by whatever name they are called, protectors of his rights as well as watchmen over his soul. It is the duty of officers in the church to oversee generally, advise, reprove and exhort,

but it is not to be expected of them, that they become accusers in every matter of wrong suggested to them, then search a whole parish for evidence, and afterwards moderate in the body which is to pronounce sentence. Common sense dictates differently concerning the division of duties in every body, which is vested with judicial powers, where there are rights to be preserved, as well as sins to be punished.

But when will a salutary discipline be maintained in the Church? never, until the ruling influence of the body is correct both in sentiment and practice: until this time there will be a scandalous omission of an important duty. Particular consciences may be grieved, and reverend bodies may address without any effect, that will be permanent. It is a want of the power of godliness, and not of information which causes the evil. Christians and churches, must endeavor to purify their lives and warm their own hearts in the spirit of love, before they are proper instruments of administering the discipline of Christ's house; and when this is done there will be little need of information how to proceed.

An important question on this subject arises. How far shall a Christian, who is conscientious, continue his connection with a church where the duty of discipline is wholly neglected? To this question the writer can give no answer but the following: act not rashly and imprudently; act in the exercise of a good conscience, and as on most deliberate consideration, will be for the glory of God and the good

of souls: neither deprive yourself the benefit of Christ's ordinances, because some, whom you cannot prevent, misuse them. Our divine Lord, on a certain occasion said, that the tares and the wheat must grow together until the angels of God separate them. An awful separation.



Sinners necessarily unhappy under the calamities of Life, and a guilty conscience.

THE first dictate of wisdom, as it respects ourselves, is to obtain the most perfect happiness; and the second, to gain a support under evils, which are inseparable from the state in which we live. Religion gives both; it is most effectual to prevent evils and procure blessings, and most powerfully supports the mind under what must be endured. The word of God assures us that "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," a most lively description of the effects of a guilty conscience, which always accompanies a bad life. If the wicked fearfully fly when no evil is approaching, except the terror of their own consciences, what must their disquietude be when heavy calamities overwhelm them? What a sense of weakness and danger! What vain endeavors to fly therefrom! What dread of pain in expectation! What fear of that providence which governs all things, and of seeing a holy God whom they have offended!

It becomes us soberly to reflect how unprepared a sinful person is to meet calamity; also,

how it is increased by guilt and by those truths, which are the support of a good man. While a sinful temper and practice are unfavorable to the exercise of reason, they give violent strength to the passions and appetites.—Persons in this condition, have not accustomed themselves to view either objects or truths rationally and in an enlarged connection; and having been wholly engrossed by present scenes, they do not know how to derive support from a consideration of those truths which relate to futurity. All who are of this character must be unprepared to meet evil. By afflictions and bereavements the accustomed objects of their support are taken, and in their stead there are no rational and divine consolations to strengthen the sinking spirits.

A sinful person, under unavoidable calamities, is unable to exercise such submission to Divine Providence as is the best possible support. The severity of trials very much depends on the manner in which we receive and endure them. In the first place, a sinful mind, in enmity, contends with the instruments of Divine Providence, not regarding the law to love our enemies. If men are the instruments of our evil, the feelings of bitter revenge arise, or if inanimate things, a most impious disquietude with nature. Or, if the sinful mind rises so high in its reflections, as to consider the Almighty first cause, it rises directly against him and his ways. All rising of the heart against God who directs, will return with double weight on the repining mind. To see the di-

vine perfections; to realize an irresistible government from which there is no escape, and to feel himself the subject of an administration and laws which cannot be escaped, must greatly aggravate the evils endured by a sinner.

A guilty conscience doubles the weight of all other calamities. To describe this hath often been attempted in lively colors; yet no human description hath equalled its severity. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth." They say, "every one who meeteth will slay me." "Terrors shall make him afraid on every side, and shall drive him to his feet." A guilty person is his own accuser, and his own knowledge both witnesses and condemns him. Being his own judge, a consciousness of his demerits appals him, and self condemned he apprehends that judgment will be speedily executed. He hath no confidence in that government, which will be glorious in his punishment, nor can he look to God as a father and a refuge in the time of evil. Conscious of sin it appears to him that the almighty must be unfriendly, consequently the whole course of nature in opposition to his wishes; also, conscious that his own practice is unfriendly to society he can have no confidence in mankind.

These are the effects of a guilty conscience. It is in itself an evil; it creates evil in imagination: it represents to the self accusing mind both the creator and his creatures in a hostile state; while justice and righteousness are a cause of dread.

Neither can the sinful find a

support under calamities by looking to futurity. In bearing trouble the hope of some good to come is a great support. We endure distress with fortitude when there is a prospect of its being followed by consequential good. This source of comfort is shut against those who disobey God. If they consider the course of nature, all its laws are calculated to bring unhappiness on the guilty; if they reflect on the course of providence, this, also, hath ever been opposed to the ways of wickedness: if they consult divine revelation, even the book of grace confirms the denunciations of the law, that the person, who wilfully continues to be sinful must continue under the power of death: or if they look to the dissolution of the body, although this may deliver from some present pains, they know not into what plague it may usher them. When they peruse the holy word of God, it no where describes eternity as a safe retreat for vice, or that even infinite grace will save an unrepenting sinner. When the sinful are in a state of prosperity, they may feign to themselves safety to come; but we are now considering them in adversity, when they are very different creatures, the follies of a sinful imagination having forsaken them. The reader never saw a person, of a character deeply vicious, groaning under heavy distress, who was able to preserve the delusion of safety.

Present sorrows being felt cannot be dissipated by the power of a depraved imagination. Every person under calamity must consider that it is as possible, and may be as consistent

with all the divine perfections that it should be the case in futurity, as that it should be at the present time.

This is a brief view of the subject, but if it were much further extended all would acknowledge that the apprehensions of a vicious person, under the inevitable evils of the world, are very distressing after the pleasures of sense have departed and they can derive no support from reason and truth. The adversity consists in the withdrawal of such worldly enjoyments as have been their only support. Their contending hearts rise against the sovereignty of God and the instruments by which his judgments are executed, and in so awful a contention they must be miserably defeated. They are, at once destitute of confidence in God, their fellow-men and themselves. Sober discernment and an uncorrupted judgment cannot hesitate a moment in giving the preference to a virtuous life.

B—H.

Religious Intelligence.

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MR. EDITOR,

TO hear of the wonderful operations of divine grace is always refreshing to the people of God. The following is an extract from a Letter, dated Smithtown, (L. Island,) March 31st, 1809.

ALANSON.

"MY DEAR UUCLE,

A sense of my duty has induced me to inform you what

the Lord has done and is still doing on this Island. By his Almighty power, the eyes of the *blind* are opened, the ears of the *deaf* unstopped, and multitudes of stout-hearted sinners have been brought to throw down the weapons of their rebellion, and to acknowledge God their rightful Lord and Sovereign.—The glorious work began at Co-ram: It has spread through Middle-Island, Old Man's, Miller's Place, Setalket and Smith-town to the westward. At Sigharbor, East-Hampton and Bridgehampton the revival has been very great. Mr. Beecher has admitted eighty members into his church since the first of January. And, blessed be God, I hope I have not been suffered to remain an idle spectator.—The staff on which I rested has been torn from me; and I have been brought to feel my need of a Saviour, and I hope and trust I have experienced the joys of pardoned sins. I date my *new-birth* the 2d of January, and since that happy period I have enjoyed more real happiness than I ever did in my whole life before.

Join with me my dear friends in blessing the name of that God who has borne with me so long; and has now brought me to a sense of my situation. Had I received my just deserts, instead of writing to my friends, I should now have been "lifting up my eyes in torment."

I feel greatly distressed for my poor sisters. I beg, my dear uncle, that you will write to them, and endeavor to convince them of their awful situation while out of the ark," &c.

ANECDOTES.

The aged Father meeting with an afflicted Son.

AN aged and pious father having arrived from a distance to the house of his son, whose wife lay dead, two others of the family being at the same time sick, on entering the door grasped the hand of his son and said, "you have wished for my coming to comfort you: this I cannot do; in so trying a season, comfort must enter your heart from a higher source. Remember the words of Christ, "these things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of cheer, I have overcome the world." This is not the first affliction you have met, and my son, if you are a Christian and continue to live, it is not the last you will experience. I knew your first serious thoughts; I know your natural disposition. I can find a word of consolation for you in the eighty ninth Psalm. "If they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." "It is through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God." Your affliction is now become irretrievable and it only remains, that you improve it in a right manner. This you will not do until you can say, "not my will but thine be done, "leave thy motherless children, "I will preserve them alive."

This plain exhortation of a pious parent, was the first means of consolation to a heart filled and broken with sorrow ; while all the condolences of polite surrounding acquaintance had served but to increase woe.

An aged Woman.

AN aged woman, on entering a place of deep affliction, after a few tears were shed, thus said "I am now at home." It being known there was no connection between her and the afflicted family, inquiry was made why she said, "I am now at home." After some apology for the manner of her expression she said. "There are too reasons, the first is ; I have been a woman of affliction, and all afflicted people appear to me like brethren. Whether they profit or not, all such are certainly in the school of preparation for heaven. They are in the best state to learn we are sinners and need chastisement.

But I have a greater reason than this. The apostle speaks of being at "home in the body and absent from the Lord." Every Christian believes there is a state of mind, which is properly described by being at home with the Lord, and being absent from the painful influences and power of the world. In my first season of affliction I was stubborn and contended hardly with God. By the power of his grace he brought me to submit. In my succeeding afflictions I have been pained : time after time my heart hath been broken : still I have had much Christian enjoy-

ment in the midst of troubles. I have been happy under my deepest calamities. I considered God on the throne, an absolute sovereign in all things, which pertained to the happiness or unhappiness of this life. I have learned that nothing which we do can merit happiness ; I have learned to look to God as a fountain when the streams are dried away. It hath pleased the Lord to give me more clear manifestations of his presence in seasons of trouble than at other times. This led me to say, "I am now at home." I am now in the midst of such scenes as have often broken my heart, but in which I have found a happiness, which the world cannot give. This convinced me that the words of the prophet are true, "it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting : for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart."

A Dying Youth.

A young person on the bed of sickness said, "five years since I should have repined under the pains I now feel. It is so long since I was mercifully remembered by God and found my peace in him. I have often heard of affliction, but never knew what it was until this sickness : I have often heard instructions and advice to the afflicted but never until now knew their value. I expect to die. I have neither brother nor sister to leave. But, oh ! my parents ! Yet I can part with them, for I

verily expect through the grace of God, to meet them again soon. They are now filled with grief, and if they should not be able, at my death, which must speedily happen, to say "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," it would indeed be a sting to me. Oh! who knows but I may have a deeper sting! If God should withdraw his presence, and my wicked heart should triumph, it would indeed be hard to bear the pain and to die. I have not now, nor do I expect ever to have but one comfort, which is to say "not my will but thine be done." To say this is the purest comfort of a Christian, and if I do not mistake, it must be the triumph of a Christian in death."

At the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. In each of these anecdotes, submission to the will of God, acting as a wise and holy sovereign, is represented to be the only sure ground of happiness under trouble. May every reader, by the possession of this disposition, be prepared to meet trials. "Let him remember the days of darkness for they shall be many."

N. B. The future favors of the gentleman who forwarded the above, are requested.

A Fact.

A Father, in his early life, was left with an only child, a daughter. He was then poor. Avarice and ambition were his ruling passions and these led him to impiety. His child was

carefully dressed, nursed and fed until her fourteenth year. In this time, by industry and small speculations, in which he was dextrous, he had acquired a decent property. Having a foundation laid for more rapid gains, and his daughter being grown to womanly size, he determined to prepare her for some respectable connexion. She was introduced to more public schools without that preparation which can be obtained only in childhood. The name of property covered these defects, and in her person she was desirable, nearly at the age of seventeen. In the moment of attempting to enter the circle of polite life, she was taken from the world by a fever. She is with her judge and we have neither to commend or accuse her: Still this we have to say, her judge, who knoweth all the circumstances of her life, must have been displeased with her parent, who was more engaged in the pursuit of property, than to impress sentiments of piety in her mind at the age most suited to receive them. For parental neglect there is no atonement, it is a sin which cannot be retrieved. Oh! that all parents considered how much more valuable moral sentiments, impressed in childhood, are to the possessor than all the wealth which can be hoarded.

After the death of his daughter, the father visited a pious neighbor to obtain consolation. He plainly said "I cannot see that God is good in permitting the death of my daughter."

To which the good man answered. I can form some idea of your trouble, although I have not experienced afflictions alto-

gether similar. As you have denied the goodness of God I will speak freely, for you profess to seek for comfort and your own duty. You say, "I cannot see that God is good in permitting the death of my daughter." Examine this matter before you come to so rash a conclusion. That he was good in giving and continuing her to you so long, and furnishing you with the means for her decent support I am persuaded you will not deny. This brings the case to a near period of time. And was he not good in taking her from you? She was become the idol both of your avarice and ambition. Before this event you did not think of God, religion or another world; now you have some thoughts of each. Who can tell but God may bless this trial to open your eyes to the truth and make you a different man. He often accompanies affliction with his effectual, sanctifying grace. Indeed, replied the parent, there may be something in this, and I must confess there is need enough. But this does not come to the point, "I do not see that God was good to my daughter in appointing to her so early a death, when she had every fair prospect for a happy life."

This, replied the pious neighbor, is giving another view of the event, which may be yet more favorable to the wisdom and goodness of God.

Your daughter was born to exist forever. This life was the only season she could have to prepare for another. With respect to her mother, who was early taken from her it is well known she was a pious woman,

and it is presumed she prayed much for this child. Between that time and the child's death, you will not say a single prayer was offered or any pains used to give her Christian knowledge. What she knew on these subjects was gleaned accidentally by living in a Christian land. You was introducing her, with all the advantages of property, into the most irreligious company which could be selected. How great the danger of such a state experience can determine.

If the child had a spark of grace, implanted in her heart, in answer to a mother's prayers, it must have been too weak to meet the temptations of her situation. Therefore it might have been the goodness of God which removed her from the school of earth to the school of heaven.

Or to make the most undesirable supposition, which I should not unless I were driven by your repining temper, if she had no Christian grace, her sins were not aggravated in their kind, and certainly were palliated by the inattention of those around her. As she was circumstanced, surrounded with temptation and under the care of those who had not the fear of God, it might be his goodness which removed her at so early a period. Her account at the bar of God might be much less awful to render than if she had been continued many years in dissipation and impiety. Arraign not, therefore the goodness of Jehovah: rather, condemn the impiety of irreligious parents. Let all parents read this account with fear and trembling.

MONITOR.

"The Lord relieveth the fatherless and widow." "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation." "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the father is this; to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."

IN no respect are the promises and providence of God more apparently coincident, than in his kind dispensations to the fatherless and the widow. The first knowledge of persons, in these conditions, excites in our minds an interest which we do not feel in other cases of affliction. So prone are we to overlook the influences of providence, and attribute that honor to means, which is due only to the great first cause, that forgetting the widow hath a God and judge and the fatherless a father in heaven, we call them the most defenceless, and perhaps the most useless of mankind. Let us not fix our opinions of this subject on either the frailty or weakness of human nature. He who is mighty in strength, who braces the arms of the valiant, and imparts to the prosperous their sources of defence, did also cause that the meal in the barrel and the oil in the cruse of the widow in Sarepta should not fail: he made Lois and Eunice the instruments of existence and the means of forming Timothy for a sphere of usefulness exceeded by few of the apostles and fathers. These are but solitary instances of God's kindness to the widowed,

which might be selected from innumerable others in sacred and profane history and within our own observation. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exercise loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth." Let not the children of the affluent and powerful glory, unless they improve these advantages for the honor of God and a virtuous life. The sheaves of Joseph's elder brethren bowed before his sheaf. Although the dream excited the vengeance of those who thought themselves better than he was; its fulfilment in the famine and vice-royalty of Egypt will never be obliterated from the history of mankind. The Lord will not forget his Josephs; neither will he forget the widow and the orphan. After a few years are passed, those, who are now most highly advantaged may bow before the unprotected orphans of the present time. This may arise from the sovereign providence of God by means we cannot now foresee; or it may take place through the virtue of some and the vice of others. The diversity of God's providence is matter of wonder to all the considerate: this providence is uncontrollable, for in its hand are found both the means and the effect. While the most absolute sovereignty is preserved, all its works appear to be effected by means; thus the highest glory accrues to God, while creatures have every motive to vigorous

exercise. The promises of earthly blessings to Christians are few. Their bread and water are made sure, while all other favors may be denied in covenant faithfulness. The widow, fatherless and afflicted are the subjects of more promises than are given to all other descriptions of people; these persons, while overlooked by the pride of the world, are most tenderly regarded by the father of mercies. There can be no greater evidence to the children of men that God is good, and that his nature is love. Therefore let not the frail child of dust despond under the inevitable troubles and pains of life, for he hath a father in heaven. "If they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

The writer was led to these reflections by conversing with an aged woman who had been a widow for more than forty years. She was on a bed of sickness which terminated in her death.

Her mind was deeply impressed with these words "*let thy widows trust in me.*" She had a cheerful hope of salvation through the grace of God, and her mind was strangely carried back to review the goodness of God to her and her children. She often exclaimed "Oh! this wonderful providence of a covenant keeping God! He forgets none of his promises! He hath never corrected me, but in covenant faithfulness; my adversities have not been greater than I

needed, and his enlightening grace must have been added to these, or I should not have seen my need of them.

After some particular questions of inquiry she gave the following account of her life and afflictions. "I was early instructed in the principles of religion by my grand parents, and my parents gave me an education suited to an industrious and reputable life. But, alas! all these dear connexions were soon taken from me. I was married at an early age. My resolutions agreed with those of my husband, by frugality and industry to amass more of the world than our parents had possessed. For a number of years we were industrious, moral in our conduct, and every thing promised fair to accomplish our intentions. A sudden and awful stroke of God left me a widow, and some untoward events rendered me pennyless. A widow with four young children around me and destitute of support, I sunk into the deepest gloom. My children and myself became tattered in dress; my health was impairing, and my spirit for exertion gone.

"I never shall forget the day, when an aged widow entered my room, who had passed through more bitter afflictions than myself. She walked on a staff. As she approached the bed on which I lay she spoke the blessed passage "*let thy widows trust in me.*" She was dim through age, but drawing her spectacles from their case, and calling my children to her she mended several breaches in their cloathing, and told them that God was the father of the

fatherless and exhorted them to be good children. After this she said to me, Mary, I know you are in trouble, and pray God it may be for your eternal good. She argued from reason, experience and the holy scriptures, especially from the blessed words already recited "let thy widows trust in me" until I was amazed at myself. I was reproved for I had no trust in God; I was confounded through a sense of my sin; I was encouraged on finding I might have an all sufficient friend, and my fortitude returned on hearing the encouragements of God to the widow and the fatherless. It is needless for me to tell you all the circumstances, through which the instruction of the aged woman and the grace of God brought me to possess greater riches than the world can give. I had no sooner attempted to help myself, than it appeared as though the providence of God helped me in every thing. I found that the promises cannot help us without the use of means to give them efficacy: I found more happiness in depending on God, than in any prosperous state I had ever imagined to be in the world. From this time, my neighbors appeared to know, "That pure religion and undefiled before God and the father is this; to visit the widows and the fatherless in their affliction." For a season charity liberally aided me; after this industry and economy took its place, and after supplying a widow's table and vestry I had some little savings to put my three boys in apprenticeships to respectable trades. Two of them I hope are pious, the other is a moral

man, and it is supposed they are all in a thriving condition. When I visit them their tables are plentifully supplied and their families neatly clad without that gaudery, which is always disagreeable to people of taste and consideration. You cannot conceive the pleasure I feel in holding my grand-children and teaching them some good hymns. This daughter I kept with myself, and you see she is in no bad circumstances. For many reasons I wished to live with her in my old age. I often tell her she is too much concerned for the world, but I hope that God will teach her.—Here she was much affected.

"But if you ask me" said she, "how all this has been done I can give you no answer but this, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widow's trust in me." —The world would not believe, if I were to give a more particular account, how we were clothed when naked, fed when hungry, healed when sick, and kept through innumerable troubles, which none but those who have felt can justly apprehend. Mark the sovereign goodness of God, and the benefits of fearing him: The goodness of God in bringing so vile a sinner as I was to fear him; lo! It was sovereign grace: And the benefits which followed the lowest degree of Christian obedience, for it was only the lowest which I ever rendered. Many children, of those who were prosperous when I was afflicted, are now sunk into the depths of distress; but mark ye, sir, it is through their own vices they are so forlorn. Blessed promises are made

to the obedient : But how can we obtain the promises, unless we comply with the terms on which they are made ?" After joining in prayer with the good woman at her request, I retired with a deep sense of the mysteries of providence in this world ; the folly of sin, the guilt

of distrusting God, the sufficiency of the promises, the certainty they will all be fulfilled, and especially of this promise,—
 " Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me."

P—8.

POETRY.

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Pleading for Mercy.

WHILE Jesus frowns there's nought can cheer my soul,
 Like one forsaken, day and night I mourn ;
 The restless waves of trouble o'er me roll,
 I faint, with grief and anguish overborne.
 No creature-aid can give my spirit rest,
 My God alone can fill my large desires ;
 His smiles alone can make me truly blest,
 While tow'rd his throne my bleeding heart aspires.
 O Saviour ! spurn not when I cry and pray ;
 Hide not thy beauties from my longing eyes ;
 Why should I dwell so far from thee away ?
 O come, and " seize my soul with sweet surprise !"
 Sweet is thy voice, and peace is in the sound,
 Thy love is better than the noblest wine !
 This is a balm for ev'ry bleeding wound,
 It fills the soul with happiness divine.

Ah wretched heart, inconstant, false and vain,
 That clings to earth, and longs for sinful joys !
 When shall it, o'er corruption, vict'ry gain,
 And soar above this world's delusive toys.

Does not thy love my warmest thoughts engage
 Thou source of hope, and fountain of delight !
 Thy cheering smiles my inward grief assuage,
 And raise my songs, tho' veil'd in gloomy night.
 Jesus, my God ! to thee I raise my pray'r,
 O cast one look of gentle pity down ;
 Let me not sink, o'erwhelm'd with deep despair,
 To hell's dark caves, beneath thine angry frown !
 Thou might'st, I own, with justice bid me go
 Where hope, nor mercy, e'er shall cheer the soul ;

Where I should agonize in endless woe,—
 In fiery waves, with ceaseless anguish, roll !
 But, oh ! what pangs would rend my throbbing heart,—
 What horror, wild, would, in my looks appear,
 Should thy stern voice, in thunder, say, “ Depart
 “ From my right hand, thou hast no portion here !”

I cannot live with those who hate thee now,
 Blaspheme thy name, despise thy word and ways,
 Whose stubborn hearts to thee refuse to bow,
 Whose lips, profane, refuse to speak thy praise.
 And can I dwell with guilty ghosts below ?
 With devils, raging, 'gainst th' immortal king !
 Where fires of wrath, and malice fiercely glow,
 And shrieks, and curses make hell's caverns ring !
 Thy grace, O Saviour, gloriously display,
 Reveal thy love, and not thy wrath alone ;
 Raise me to see a bright. “ a heav'nly day,”—
 To join the choirs that sing around thy throne !

CONTRITIO.

Anna.—A Fragment.

—————SLOW mov'd the darken'd hearse
 Of once-lov'd Anna ! Now, nor meets the eye,
 No look affectionate ; nor swelling sigh,
 Nor grief's lorn language, greets the passing ear,
 Nor guilt, nor shame appals at Anna's bier !

Soul-sear'd Lorenzo ! but for thee, e'en now,
 With life and innocence and health's fair brow
 Serene, still privileged—she yet had known
 Those joys, those transports virtue calls her own ;
 Had known conjugal and maternal love,
 On earth had tasted half the joys above !

All earthly joys now forfeited, for thee,
 For thee, Lorenzo !—now thine Anna see
 Bereft of happiness, of hope, below ;
 Perhaps, too, banish'd to eternal woe,
 Her crimes uncancell'd in a Saviour's blood,
 Her soul unwelcom'd by a pard'ning God !

Ah no ! her trembling tongue a Saviour's name
 Confess'd. In death, repentant, dared proclaim
 Her crimes, her bold transgression of his holy laws,
 Nor once, reproachful, thee the guilty cause

Accus'd. Sweet "mercy." then, her only theme,
 Her rais'd affections soar'd beyond the dream
 Of earthly bliss, to where a Saviour's voice,
 In love's own thrilling accents, bids rejoice,
 Rejoice in *Him*, nor mourn offences past,
 Rejoice, where myriads chaunt, "Him first—Him last" !

Such heav'n wrought pleasures (thus debas'd, thus low,
 Thus lost. Lorenzo !) thou canst never know :
 Such guilt-forgiven raptures ne'er canst prove,
 Till deep repentance taste redeeming love !

Then, O beware ! death will not long delay ;
 Swift will the morning of that awful day,
 In thunders break, when thou alone must stand
 Before thy frowning Judge : nor his right hand
 Thy uncleans'd soul receive.

Shrinks not thy spirit from a doom like this ?
 Then view thy forfeiture of *earthly* bliss !
 See in life's future, opening prospects fair,
 Some lovely object of thy dearest care,
 Some pledge, perhaps, of joys forever flown,
 A daughter, dawning into life. Unknown,
 Unfelt, unfeared all ill ; her tender mind
 For lightest, sweetest, purest joys design'd.

On this lov'd form, perhaps, some hidden eye
 Unhallow'd rests ; awhile securely nigh,
 In ambush dark, th' insidious hour to wait,
 (A mother's anguish now for her too late !)
 Then fastens, swift, the keenly-sharpen'd fangs
 Of "havock, spoil and ruin" ! Thus in pangs,
 Thy rending soul shall all-unpitied prove,
 For Anna's fate, how bleeds parental love !



1809. *Donation to the Missionary Society of Connecticut.*

April 17. Israel Brainard, contributed in new settlements \$ 1 : 00



NOTICE. The Letter of Miss P.—J—, and the account of her death
 were not received in season for publication the present month. They
 shall be inserted in our next number. They
Ed.